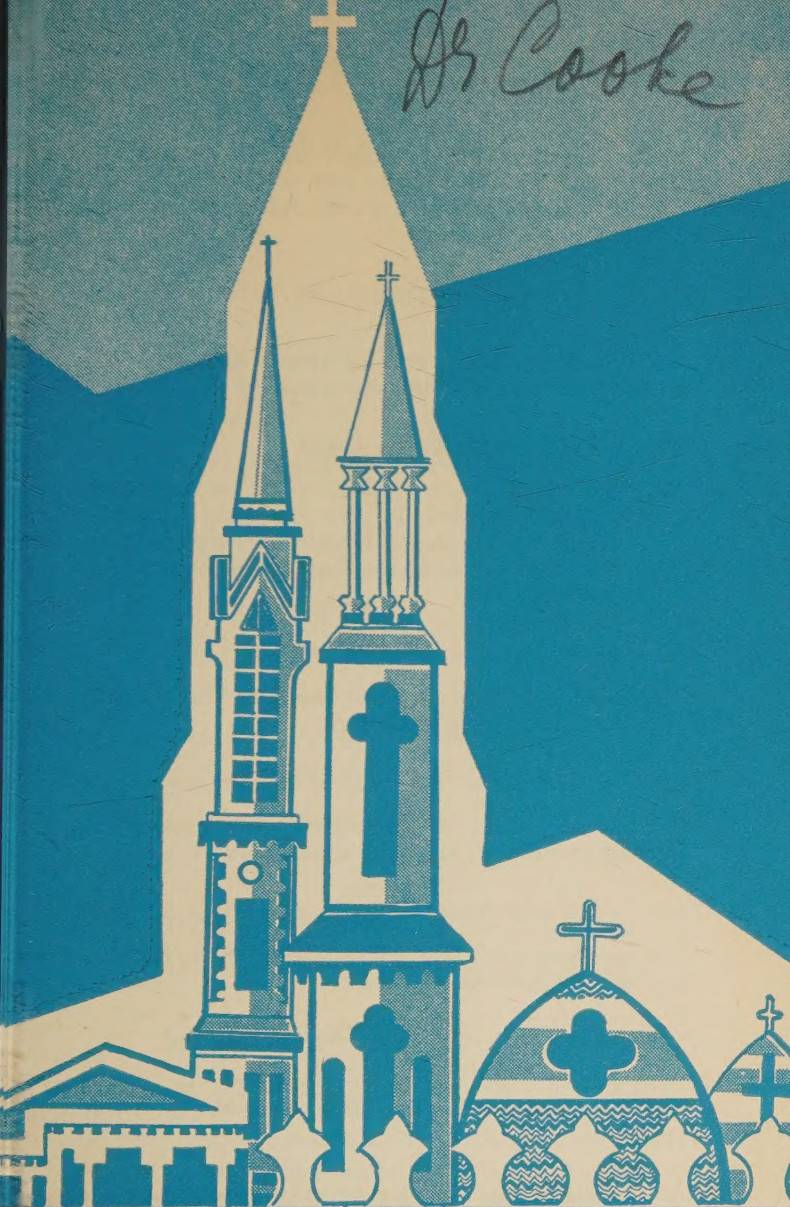


H. Cooke



THE NEWS BULLETIN
of the Near East Christian Council

How Old Are You?

I SUPPOSE sometime in everybody's life that question is asked. People like to find out whether you are young and fickle and foolish, or old and sober and sedate. And sometimes you can't tell from the outside cover!

All right, all right! I'll ask the question . . . How old is the News Bulletin?

Thank you. For a long time we weren't quite sure. We didn't even know what our proper name was.

That sounds bad. What do you mean?

Way back in the early days of 1926, we were known as "Missionary Cooperation in Western Asia and Northern Africa". Then, on our second birthday, we changed our name to "News from the Area of the Council for Western Asia and Northern Africa".

And when did you adopt this name?

Beginning in 1929, we became known as The News Bulletin of the Near East Christian Council.

Sounds to me like you're in need of another name again!

We're ready! Have you any suggestions? Someone said that "Tarshish and Sheba" might be appropriate.

That's stimulating! Now let's see . . . I can think of others!

I'm sure you can, and thank you very much, but don't you want to know how old we are?

With all that name changing you must be ancient!

Not quite . . . this issue, Summer 1961, is Number 73. Seventy-three issues over thirty-five years! What do you think of that?

You'd better change your name! "The days of our years are three-score years and ten . . ."

THE NEWS BULLETIN

of the Near East Christian Council

Summer 1961

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The News Bulletin

is published three times a year by the Near East Christian Council, P.O. Box 235, Beirut, Lebanon. Neither the Council nor members of the Council are responsible for any statements made in the NEWS BULLETIN except such as have been previously authorized by due process. Articles and comments are welcomed by the Editorial Board and the Editor, the Rev. Don MacNeill, P.O. Box 80, Kuwait.



JESUS CHRIST

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Though He was in the form of God
He did not count equality with God
as a thing to be grasped,
but emptied Himself,
taking the form of a servant,
being born in the likeness of men.
And being found in human form,
He humbled Himself
and became obedient unto death,
even death on a cross.

Therefore God has highly exalted Him

*Light of Light,
Very God of Very God*

The Affirmations of the Gospel

In this area of God's good world, there is a tendency to talk about the fringes of the Gospel, but never to address ourselves to its tremendous relevance to our day, and age. Our good friend, David Brown, formerly connected with the Bishop Gwynne College in the southern Sudan, and now Canon Missioner of the Episcopal Church in the Sudan, directs our thinking to the core of the message of God in Christ....

AS CHRISTIANS, one of our most difficult tasks is to make the message of the Bible understandable and relevant to our neighbours. We are ourselves lovingly familiar with its language and its themes, but to others the Bible often appears irrelevant and out-of-date, a literature worthy of respect, but of relevance only to the private lives of those who acknowledge its authority.

After all, the most recent of the Biblical books was written nearly nineteen centuries ago, and the whole, especially the Old Testament, comes from a culture and environment very different from that of the national states in the Near East today, and the many-sided bustle and glamour of its great cities. We often react to this apparent indifference to the message of the Bible by blaming the hardness of those who hear us, or by intensifying our efforts to sound the Gospel, in its Biblical dress, in people's ears, but we would wisely spend time in trying to understand more clearly what God is saying through the Bible and how to make that message clear and urgent to those among whom we live.

What follows is offered as a small contribution to that task, and represents an attempt to set out, in non-Biblical language, the basic affirmations of the Gospel.

I. God Lives

There are many reasons why this great, and one would suppose, self-evident, fact needs to be affirmed today with the same urgency as it was preached by the prophets of the past. Man's growing competence in regulating and controlling the world in which he lives is destroying for many that sense of wonder and awe for the supernatural which nourishes the prac-

tice of worship. Thus, for example, the successful launching of the sputniks has made our world neighbours to the other planets, and, in consequence, many people find it increasingly difficult to treat the "Heaven of God" as real, or to understand the glory of the Ascension and the promise of the Second Coming.

The growing competence in medicine has similarly strengthened man's belief in the efficacy of drugs and techniques to a point where they rely almost entirely on the diagnosis of the doctor or the skill of the surgeon, and, when they fail, are reluctant to seek in their extremity the mercy of God. Furthermore, the growing familiarity of educated people with a number of different religious systems has dulled for them the authoritativeness of their own, and has led many to confuse the spiritual content of a religion with the culture and ethical system in which it finds expression.

At the same time, the increasing effectiveness of propaganda, through the radio and the press, coupled with the growing activities of international assemblies, such as the United Nations, and the different political groupings throughout the world, has given exaggerated importance to the speeches of politicians; their assertions of rights and policies all too often appear to usurp the place which in earlier ages would have been given to principles which have a more obviously religious foundation.

It is for these and other reasons that Christians must affirm quite clearly and plainly the simple fact that *God is living today*, and that He is personally involved in all that happens in His universe. To recover again a lively realization of the immediate relationship of God to all that men do, would restore humility to human endeavours and bring a new and sobering perspective to the struggles of the nations, and to the actions of politicians, business men and national leaders; the world is God's and men are entrusted with its government by Him.

II. God has a purpose for men and women

But this living God is not only concerned with the world in the sense that He knows and judges what is happening; more than that, He has a purpose for every human person, and is personally interested in its achievement.

The culture of our times also affirms that there is a purpose in life, and its nature is defined all too blatantly in advertisements, at the cinema and on the hoardings. As defined there, the highest aim in life is related to success in this world, whether through the amassing of possessions and the acquiring of luxuries, the enjoyment of romantic sexual experience or through the winning of a position and place in the community. The policies and programmes of governments often present more realistic and sober aims, but again they are, perhaps naturally, related to the achievement of aims which are judged

as good almost solely in terms of national and material prosperity.

God's purpose, as set forth in the Bible however, while recognizing the legitimacy of schemes of social and economic reform, differs in its aims, which are defined, in the first place, by reference to the life of Jesus, a life which by earthly standards was notably unsuccessful. His purpose is that men should so mature in their characters and their spirits that they approximate in likeness to Jesus Christ. Here indeed is a standard which differs from those commonly employed to measure success or happiness, and yet one which because it concerns the use and character of the "self" is intelligible in every circumstance and in every environment.

Secondly, although the purpose of God is related to life on this earth, it will only be consummated in the ages of eternity; it measures the present in terms not of immediate success, but of the Divine Judgment and in the light of eternity.

III. God intervenes to achieve His purpose

In asserting that God has a purpose for men which transcends their life in this world, the Gospel does not minimize its value. On the contrary, it affirms its importance and its significance as a training ground for that which lies beyond. Men are not invited to escape from the drudgery of this world by indulging in dreams about that which is to come. They are called to treat every facet of their lives, the real, the ordinary, the every-day as opportunities for the realization of God's purposes for them.

The patient toil of women in peasant families, and the daily labour of the farmer or the clerk, their joys and their sorrows alike, the discipline of routine and the exhilaration of an emergency, the testings of marriage and family life, even suffering and pain, all have their part to play in the school of God, and contribute to growing maturity and Christlikeness. Thus the Gospel affirms the dignity and worth of human life in all its fulness, the abiding beauty and mutual loyalties of marriage, the responsibilities of parenthood, the creativity of friendship and of social intercourse, the training which comes from art and literature, from music and from sports, the discipline of citizenship and of social service. It affirms also the importance of social and economic reforms where they enrich men's lives and create conditions in which people become more easily the persons God wishes them to be.

The Gospel, however, affirms the impor-



tance of life in this world for a second reason. It is the place in which God is actively at work furthering the purposes which He has for men and women. This is the third great theme of the Bible and it is presented there, on the panorama of the Old Testament and in the pages of the New, in a variety of ways.

To put it briefly, the Gospel affirms that the living God is related to men as a Father to His children. He loves and cares for them, not by indulging their faults, but by correcting and chastising them, with forgiveness and understanding. He has, in the Person of Jesus Christ, dealt decisively and victoriously with the evil which tries to thwart His purposes. Through His Spirit, He changes, sustains and directs the minds and wills of those who respond to Him, so that they may become what He wishes them to become, mature and Christlike children of God. This intervention of God in human lives is never forced, but always freely and graciously offered.

Christ the Affirmation

The three great affirmations of the Gospel which have been outlined above were the themes of Christ's preaching. The theme of His first sermon, "The Kingdom of God Is At Hand!", was a clear statement that God claims the sovereignty over men's lives. The implication of that kingship is worked out in the parables.

In the Sermon on the Mount, He taught how men should behave who are the children of a Father Who knows their every need and Who sees their every action, even at home, "with the door shut".

Similarly, He warned men against making the riches of this world the aim of their lives. He encouraged them to prepare themselves for the Day of Judgment by "laying up treasures in heaven". Even His call to discipleship, to follow Him "by carrying the cross" was related to the moment in Eternity when He would be able to acknowledge them as His brothers and sisters before the angels of God. Lastly, He spoke of the New Birth to be accomplished by the Spirit within them. That Spirit would be their counsellor and friend.

It was not only by His lips, however, that He affirmed the Gospel. He was Himself the Gospel, and His life the demonstration of the truthfulness and validity of its message. The Gospels testify that here was Someone for Whom God was a living and present reality, a Father to Whom He might turn in prayer at every moment, Whose will was the only thing worth doing.

Similarly, because He was Man, He affirmed in His own life the destiny to which God calls His human children and the maturity which He desires to see in them. His Sonship was, of course, unique, yet His relationship with the Father clearly reveals the intimacy and discipline, the boundless love and the

daily succour, with which God purposes to nourish and protect His children.

Finally, because He was also God's Word made flesh, the Eternal Son Who for our sakes became poor, He is Himself the unique embodiment of God's intervention on men's behalf. His quiet faithful walking on the paths of Galilee and in the streets of Jerusalem were the footprints of divine love. His labours were those of the divine shepherd who searches for his sheep who are scattered abroad. Above all, His self-giving on the Cross demonstrated within time, and in the environment of first-century Palestine, what God felt towards His creation. Jesus went to the very limit to give to His disciples His patience and compassion, His healing and His teaching, even His whole Self. We cannot but believe that God does the same. If God is really like Jesus then we can affirm His constant, ceaseless, loving activity towards His children, even when they reject or ignore Him.

Affirmations Today

Here then we see the task of the Christian. To affirm that God is personally and intensely alive to all that goes on in His world; that He has a purpose for every man, woman or child, measured by the maturity of Christ; that He is actively at work in the modern world, through the Holy Spirit, seeking to achieve His purpose in human lives.

These are affirmations which are relevant to the lives of every human person, however lowly their position or drab their environment. They are relevant also to the great issues of our times, applicable in the realms of politics and in the councils of the nations, by ensuring that attempts to secure prosperity and progress serve the development of true maturity, both within individuals and within the nations. They can be preached about in the pulpit; they can be expounded in the classroom; but above all they are such as may be commended by men and women to their neighbours in the ordinary business of everyday life. This was how Jesus affirmed them, in conversation or in chance encounter, not only in the synagogue. And, like Him, we are called to commend these great facts to the attention of our communities, wherever they are, not by our words alone, but by the demonstration of our lives, through His grace—the glory and the purposes of the living God.



Views of the Triennial:

Above, Dr. Farid Audeh of Beirut greets Dr. Labib Mishriki of Cairo, followed by Bishop Najib Cuba'in of Jerusalem, the Rev. Elias Shehadeh of Bethlehem, the Rev. J. Gilbert Baker of London, and the Rev. W. S. Woolworth of Istanbul.

Right, Listening at one of the sessions.

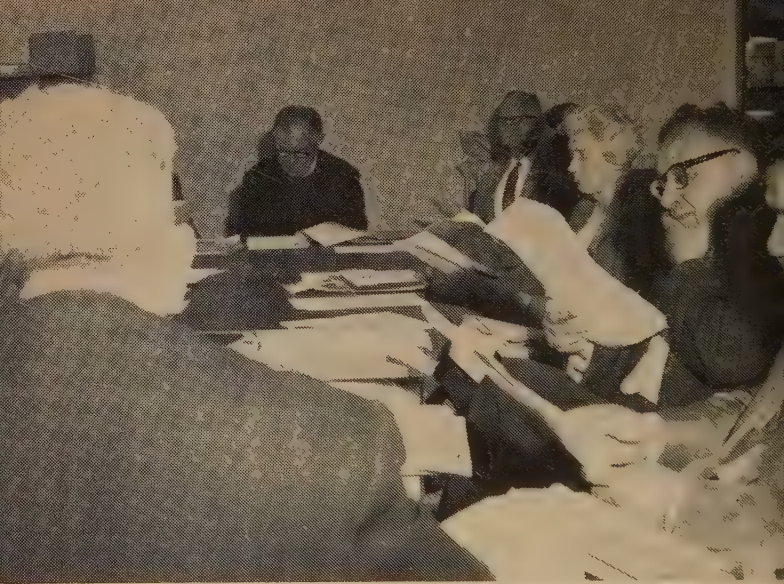
Fellowship, Cooperation, and Vision

The 1961 Triennial

THESE THREE WORDS were the keynote of the Thirteenth Plenary Meeting of the Near East Christian Council—fellowship, cooperation and vision. Words that penetrated into the discussions of importance in radio, refugee relief, integration and literature—words that symbolized the steady movement forward in the united cooperative work of the Near East Christian Council.

Thirty official delegates, along with an equal number of official observers, consultants and friends, filled the assembly hall of the University Christian Center in Beirut, Lebanon, during the period from the 17th until the 21st of April, as these discussions were carried on.





Bishop Stephen Neill discusses World Christian Books with the Literature Committee

Perhaps the most drastic step was taken in the Department of Literature. Here the whole organization was revised and revitalized, with thanks to the guidance and direction of Dr. William N. Wysham, who has been a special consultant during the past year. The Central Literature Committee takes on a more significant role, pointed up by two secretaries, and a bold and imaginative new distribution program is scheduled for the next five years. This step will call forth all the cooperation and vision possible.

The Study Program, recognizing the demands upon the Rev. Canon A. Kenneth Cragg in his new position as Warden of St. Augustine's College, Canterbury, authorized the formation of an advisory Council to unify and concert local institutes and summer schools with the study program in association with Dr. Cragg until such time as a suitable full-time Director becomes available.

The Christian Radio Project was acknowledged as the most rapidly expanding of all our programs, and is rapidly becoming one of the largest projects for Christian witness ever undertaken anywhere in the world by the Church of Christ. Comment is found elsewhere in this issue on this.

The *News Bulletin* as well came in for comment and advance. An Editorial Council was appointed to guide and direct the Editor in content and policy for the future.

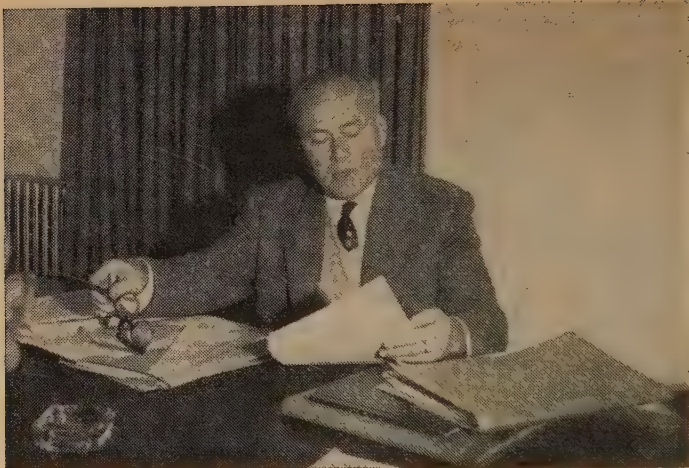
Vision and new insights are sought for the Near East Survey on the Training of the Ministry, to be initiated by the International Missionary Council this autumn. The Advent issue of the *News Bulletin* will seek to keep pace with this survey, as it centers its thoughts on imaginative and creative ministries that are opening up during this new age. The survey will be headed up by the Reverend Douglas Webster, and is scheduled to begin in the eastern portion of our area in September.



The Rev. Philip Abbas Khabush of Sudan talking with the Rev. Benjamin Weir and the Rev. Ibrahim Daghir

The work among the refugees has been directed with signal effectiveness these past years by Mr. Willard Jones, whose resignation was regretfully accepted. The Rev. Douglas Decherd of Tripoli, Lebanon, will take over the work at the end of the summer.

As Willard and Christina Jones retire, we give them our heartfelt thanks for their leadership, wishing them all good things in the years to come. The following minute was adopted by the Council:



Mr. A. Willard Jones

With reference to the report made to the Council in regard to the impending retirement of Mr. A. Willard Jones, the Executive Secretary of the N.E.E.C. Committee for Refugee Work, this Council would like to place on record its deep appreciation and profound gratitude for Mr. Jones' indefatigable efforts and the services rendered by him during the past six years, and, in particular, for the deep human interest and Christian concern he has at all times shown in the refugees and their problems. We further wish to pay tribute to and commend Mr. Willard Jones for the high administrative competence he has shown in the course of his arduous tasks. Nor can we forget Christina Jones whose love and acts of gracious kindness and mercy have made glad the hearts and lives of those whom the world calls refugee.

In fellowship, in cooperation and with vision, in this year of grace 1961, in which is to be consummated the integration of the two great ecumenical councils, the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches, the Triennial of the Near East Christian Council took upon its lips the prayer of Christian unity, and bore upon its heart His great commission of witness. In this same spirit, fresh understanding was found of His command to us and His plan for us throughout the Near East.

Saint George's Jerusalem

Most readers of the News Bulletin will already have heard something about the founding of a theological college at Jerusalem in the course of this year, but not so many will know just what are the aims and objects of the new foundation. Its principal here seeks to explain and make some of the intended functions more widely known....

IT HAS for many years been hoped and intended that St. George's Collegiate Church (the Anglican Cathedral) in Jerusalem should be a centre of sacred study, but the fulfilment of these hopes and intentions has had to wait until the present. Many details still have to be worked out, but already there are definite plans along which the college is developing.

It is aimed to provide for the training of Anglican ordination candidates from the countries within the jurisdiction of the Archbishop in Jerusalem. These for the most part would be graduates from universities in the Near East. The establishment of such a centre will enable Anglicans to complete their training without travelling to India or the U.K. or the U.S.A. Already at least three men drawn from different countries are hoping to come into residence soon for their training. It is, of course, intended that St. George's shall work in close cooperation with universities and theological colleges in neighbouring countries, and it will welcome students from the Near East School of Theology or the Evangelical Seminary in Egypt, either for special courses or to complete their training for the Anglican ministry.

A second aim is to offer study courses for clergy students from all parts of the Anglican world. These would normally come for not less than a year's residence. For the last nine years, St. Augustine's Canterbury has been the Central College of the Anglican Communion and has been doing this type of work; but, as Bishop Stephen Bayne has written of St. George's, "I believe and hope that it will develop a line and character of its own—I am always distressed to have it referred to as if it were an alternative to St. Augustine's College, for I believe it should have and will have a vocation of its own, and an important



*St. George's Close,
Jerusalem*

place in its own right . . . I see the college developing a unique character, actually, with its unique opportunities for biblical and archaeological study in an ecumenical setting, and its responsibilities both as a theological college for the Archbishopric and also as a centre for thoughtful graduate study for our whole Communion. St. Augustine's has its own job to do, and is doing it well. What a blessing it will be to have the two colleges."

St. George's hopes to put special emphasis on accepting students who may afterwards have a distinctive theological contribution to make to the life of the church in their own areas, in such fields as the teaching and training of others, in writing, translating, and so on.

It is felt that St. George's should provide facilities for research for scholars of different communions. It may well be that faculty members on sabbatical leave from

their own institutions will be glad to make use of the college with its library to enable them to undertake some individual or joint programme of study, research or writing. No doubt the college will also be glad to make use of the specialized interests of such scholars by inviting them to give occasional lectures or lead seminar courses.

Lastly it is hoped to offer courses of shorter duration on specific topics or for limited groups. For example, the summer seminars on Islamics have now been established for a number of years, and it is hoped that these, which have been sponsored by the N.E.C.C. and directed by Canon Kenneth Cragg, will continue and be fitted into the college's programme. Refresher courses for clergy or teachers, or for missionaries travelling to and from their stations, on furlough, will be other ways in which the college may be able to serve the church.

Selected ordinands from England or elsewhere may be able to come for a term or more, either as a part of their training, or for a period additional to what is prescribed by their local requirements. Before the last war, Wycliffe Hall Theological College, Oxford, used to come out *en bloc* every second year for a summer vacation term's work, and there are provisional plans for a resumption of these visits. The college will also provide an excellent setting for conferences which outside bodies may wish to organize.

Although St. George's is an Anglican college and foundation, it hopes to welcome students from other communions and traditions, and to serve a truly ecumenical purpose. It will

therefore keep closely in touch with the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, near Geneva. There, ecumenical contact and discourse take place within the milieu of western Europe with its Roman Catholic and post-Reformation churches; and the Eastern and Orthodox element can rarely be fully represented. In Jerusalem however the opposite is the case, and in this respect the two institutions can be complementary to one another.

It must be emphasized that the achievement of all these aims still lies ahead. The necessary building and equipment of the college and library are being put in hand now, and full courses will be starting in a matter of months. Most of the staff are already in residence. No doubt there will be much that may need to be modified or adapted as time goes on and the college develops as a living entity. We are certainly aware of the dangers of undue rigidity of planning in the early stages. But we are confident that, as time goes on, the college will not only play an increasingly important part in the life of the Anglican Communion, but also a part of growing significance to the whole of Christendom.

Now available through the N.E.C.C. offices in Beirut:

THE VOICE OF THE GOSPEL, a brief brochure on the Radio Project and your part in it.

Also,

Monthly Bulletins giving news and progress in radio and literature in the Near East.

Send for your copies now!

WORLD CHR

IS IT REASONABLE for any series to claim this title? Many people have questioned it; but, with forty *books* now published, with *translations* in almost forty languages, with *contributors* from eleven different nations, and from eleven *different branches* of the Christian Church, those responsible for the series feel that the title was not unwisely chosen. The books go to every country this side of the iron and bamboo curtains, and it is believed that some penetrate even beyond them.

This is a series for Christians who are willing to think and to study. The books are written in fairly simple English, and are meant for those who have not much theological knowledge, but they do not simplify in the sense of making things appear to be simple when they are not really simple.

Do you want to know more about—the Bible—Christian doctrine—Church history—current problems—the life of devotion? You will find something to help you here. A complete list of books so far published, in English, in Arabic, in Persian, is available from your nearest Christian bookshop.

37 C. F. D. MOULE A CHOSEN VESSEL A Cambridge professor uses his great scholarship to make Paul live for us against his environment in the Roman empire of his day. This is a book for everyone living in the Near East; after all, Christians in the Near East today are looking out on the very scenes that Saul of Tarsus saw in the days of his ministry—and are facing quite a number of the same problems.

38 G. F. VICEDOM CHURCH AND PEOPLE IN NEW GUINEA What do you know about New Guinea? Did you know that in fifty years a living Church of 200,000 members has been gathered in from peoples who at the beginning of this century were cannibals and headhunters? How has this miracle been brought about? Has the whole Church lessons to learn from this astonishing history?

33 DENIS BALLY PALESTINE AND THE BIBLE The Gospel is a message of timeless truth; at the same time it is a

WORLD C

Sponsored by the International Missionary Council, Edinburgh House

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سلسلة الكتاب المسيحي

مجموعة رائدة من الكتب

صدرت حديثاً عن لجنة المطبوعات للشؤون منها:

الدعاء في المسيحية (بيروت)

شهادة متى يسوع (القاهرة)

لوقا يشهد للمسيح (القاهرة)

المزامير في المسيحية (بيروت)

revelation of God given in a particular time and place. You live in Palestine? All the same, you are likely to learn from Professor Baly, who lived in Palestine for fifteen years and looked on it with the eye of an expert geographer, many things that you never knew about the country. And perhaps you may learn from him why Palestine among all the countries of the earth was particularly fitted to receive this revelation.

36 STEPHEN NEILL WHAT IS MAN? This is the heart of the controversy between communists and Christians. To the communist, man is simply a product of time and matter, and he has no destiny beyond this world and the future that he can himself make within this world. The Christian concepts of freedom, responsibility, and eternity play no part in the communist outlook. Here you have them all set out, in the light of the revelation in the Bible and in Jesus Christ. Get your communist friends to read this book. They may not agree with it; at least they may acquire some idea of what Christians are talking about and why.

BOOKS

on S.W. 1, and published by the Lutterworth Press, 4 Bouverie
shops through the Near and Middle East.



Dr. Sigurd Aske, Director of the Voice of the Gospel, Addis Ababa

The Rev. Hal Fisher of N.E.C.C., Beirut

That They May Hear...

A Progress Report

On The Christian Radio Station Project in Ethiopia

EXCITEMENT IN THE Near East Christian Council churches is mounting as plans and actions move forward to the day when *The Voice of the Gospel* will be broadcasting from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The target date when broadcasts are to begin is now set for Christmas 1962. And that date will be the culmination of the hopes and visions of many for a fresh opportunity to tell the Good News of the Gospel and its meaning for all of life to the peoples of the Near East, Africa and southern Asia via radio.

The contractual agreement between the Ethiopian government and the Lutheran World Federation, senior partner with the Near East Christian Council in the station project, was signed early this year. The Ethiopian government has graciously granted favorable contractual conditions and has encouraged that construction of the station start at once.

Already, land has been purchased for the studio and housing sites on the edge of Addis Ababa. Foundations are being laid and construction is progressing on eleven houses, administrative offices, and a broadcast studio building large enough to permit preparation of four programs simultaneously. On May 3, 1961, the bids by antenna and transmitter equipment companies were opened and contracts awarded for the immediate construction of two transmitters and an antenna system that will beam programs to all the Near East and to central and southern Africa. All technical construction is being rushed to completion for testing by the fall of 1962. Technicians have already arrived on the scene in Ethiopia to press towards the target date of Christmas 1962 when *The Voice of the Gospel* should be on the air.

The Near East Christian Council is organizing itself for these broadcasts too. In April, just after the N.E.C.C. Triennial, the Radio Project Committee held its organization meeting. Chosen representation of the churches was present from nearly every



Seated: *Dr. Sigurd Aske, Dr. Harry G. Dorman, Jr.*
Standing: *The Rev. Don MacNeill, Mr. Fuad Accad, the Rev. Hal Fisher*

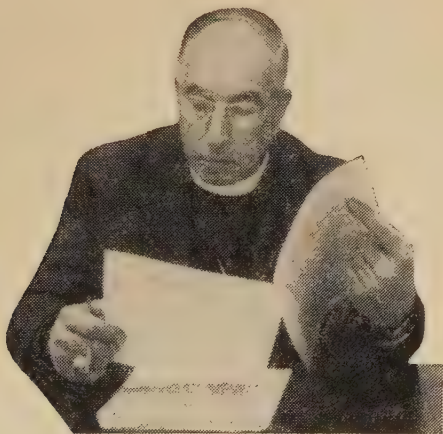
country of the Near East. The Right Reverend Najib Cuba'in was elected chairman of this work committee, and the Reverend Edwin M. Luidens was named as General Director of the Project.

At the meeting, decisions were made to establish recording studios in Iran, Kuwait and Cairo, in addition to the one already operative in Beirut. Miss Alice Sim'on was selected to direct program production at the Kuwait studio site. A final decision still needs to be made from among several candidates for this work both in Egypt and in Iran. It is planned that production of programs will begin in each of these areas just as soon as qualified production personnel can be found.

The Radio Project Committee asserted its firm belief that the responsibility for the broadcasts should be the work of the churches—that the programs to the peoples of the Near East should be promoted and prepared by the churches of the Near East. In this way, the indigenous churches will be able to minister to the needs and interests of the people in the world about them. In this way, too, the churches will be interested in and able to arrange for means of following up the listeners so they will be drawn to the life of the Church.

To promote the programs and to carry our research studies on what are the most effective and popular programs, the Radio Project Committee has appointed as Directors of Audience Relations the Reverend Ayyad Zachary in Egypt and Mr. Wilbur Dekker in the Arabian Gulf. Others for other areas of the Near East are yet to be chosen.

The Near East Christian Council realizes, as it works towards the date when broadcasts will begin, that a tremendous task lies ahead if *The Voice of the Gospel* is to be an effective tool for



The Rt. Rev. Najib A. Cuba'in

education and evangelism in the hands of the Church. It also realizes the vast, even yet unforeseen, opportunities the Church will have in her task in the Near East if radio is used effectively. Consequently, all Christians are called upon to lend their support—in prayer, financial backing, writing of programs and follow-up materials, and participation in programs—to the end that *The Voice of the Gospel* may truly be a clear prophetic voice in our day.

Notes and Comments on Recent Books of Near East Interest

Rivers in the Desert: A History of the Negev, by Nelson Glueck. American Edition published by Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, 101 Fifth Ave, New York 3.

THOSE WHO REMEMBER Dr. Nelson Glueck as the Annual Professor or the Director of the American School of Oriental Research during the days of the British mandate in Palestine, will find many of the paragraphs in this book bringing back the conversations full of experiences, relatable to the Scriptures, in which the gifted director was always glad to participate. Though these paragraphs are interesting and instructive, dealing as they do with the author's work up and down the Negev during the past dozen years, there are well-chosen pages of illustration in addition. (It is partly this fact that makes the book so expensive, \$ 6.50.)

There are references to the Bible characters known in and to this section of the Holy Land, from Abraham and Hagar onwards. But there are references to the repetitions of history outside the boundaries of Holy Writ. How many of us knew, for instance, "that early Christians and criminals were herded together in slave camps in the Wadi Arabah for the purpose of mining and smelting its ores" (p. 156). And what a mine of information about the Nabateans! "The Byzantine crosses of early Christianity were emblazoned in countless places" (p. 249). Students of the Qur'an will be interested in the temple devoted to the goddess *Allat*, mentioned in Surah 53 (p. 237).

Solomon comes into the picture and the more unlikely Uzziah with his "towers in the wilderness" and his many cisterns. But perhaps one of the most important sentences in the book is this: "Once again it has been demonstrated that the decisive factor in the rise and fall of civilizations is the human one" (p. 210). This might almost constitute the preacher's "text" for much of the book.

The reader should note the wealth of Biblical citations and look out in reading for the parallel of modern times with the days that are past. He should value the pen-pictures drawn here as much as the photographs, for the light they shed on the Old Testament especially. In days when the tide of sophistication is setting in so fast, this volume will help to redress the balance by an orientation back to the orient—perhaps none too soon!

Eric Bishop, London

T. R. ASHTON

Consecrated Bishop

On St. Mark's Day, April 25, 1961 the thoughts and prayers of the Near East turned to Jerusalem for the consecration of Hassan Dehqani-Tafti as bishop in Iran of the Episcopal Church

REPRESENTATIVES of the Orthodox and other ancient Eastern churches, the Roman church, and the Near East Christian Council had taken their seats in the choir when the procession of clergy entered St. George's Cathedral Church in Jerusalem for the consecration of the Rev. Hassan Barnabe Dehqani-Tafti as the new Bishop in Iran to succeed the Right Rev. W. J. Thompson who has retired.

The new bishop, standing with the Archbishop, and accompanied by Bishops Cuba'in and Thompson, and Orthodox churchmen



The Consecration Service, like an English Coronation Service, is set within the framework of the Communion Service. The Archbishop in Jerusalem was the celebrant, Bishop Thompson read the Epistle in Persian, and Bishop Allison of the Sudan read the Gospel. The Right Rev. Najib A. Cuba'in, Bishop of the Diocese of Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, preached the sermon and spoke of the debt which the younger Churches owed to the missionaries, but said that the time had now come when the younger Churches were in a position to assume their own national leadership. As one national Bishop to another, his words were wise counsel to his brother, Hassan.

After the sermon, the Consecration proper started with the presentation of the Bishop-elect and the Oath of Obedience. This was followed by the Litany with special prayers for the Bishop-elect. Then came the Examination: "Are you persuaded that the holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ? . . . Will you . . . live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world . . . an example of good works? . . . Will you be faithful in ordaining, sending, or laying hands on others?"

"I will so do, by the help of God."

Then the new Bishop put on the episcopal rochette and chimere and pectoral cross and ring, and, kneeling down, the whole congregation joined in singing *Veni, Creator Spiritus*, asking for the gift of the Holy Spirit. As the Archbishop and the other Bishops laid their hands upon Hassan's head, the words were spoken, "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Bishop in the Church of God . . ."

As a Persian Bible was delivered to him, the admonition was given: "Think upon the things contained in this Book. Be diligent in them . . . Be to the flock of Christ a shepherd, not a wolf; feed them, devour them not . . . Hold up the weak, heal the sick, bind up the broken, bring again the outcasts, seek the lost . . . Be so merciful, that you be not too remiss; so minister discipline, that you forget not mercy."

As the Communion Service continued, the new Bishop administered the Cup. Among those who received Communion were his wife, Margaret, and representatives of the Church in Iran.

At the close of the Service Bishop Hassan was led out by the Archbishop at the head of the procession, and, in the courtyard, the formal dignity of the service gave way to informal congratulations and the taking of many photographs, as well as reunions of clergy from all over the Near East.

Bishop Hassan returned to his diocese as the first Persian Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Iran, but knowing that he was part of a much wider fellowship which had commissioned him for his work in the years ahead.

The Soul Size of Literature

What is the task of the Christian writer? Is he truly an artist, whose mission, as Goethe has pointed out, is to help a generation see? If so, the work of literature becomes far more than merely publishing books and distributing them... it is life and love in the Name of Christ...

"WE'RE GOING to publish a new book next week," the man in the printing shop said. "It's translated—a book on theology—you know, a statement on what we Christians should believe!"

Very interesting, very interesting indeed!

But is it what we need? Do we need more and more titles of sermons, and church history and theology to fill the space on our shelves, or to give us the answers to the questions others are asking?

Why aren't we asking the questions? Isn't this an all-important dimension in the life of faith? The personal intimate soul-searching question—everyday existence painted upon the larger canvas of life and faith and love. Do we not need to see the books that we print, and the words that we write in the "soul-size" dimension of the world in which we live?

These are real questions of piercing significance for all of us, and not only for those in publishing and printing. Over the past three years, more than eighteen million pages in Arabic and more than fifteen million pages in other languages have rolled from the presses in the area. Over 160,000 books, comprising some sixteen million pages, were sold in Arabic alone. Of these figures we can justifiably be proud. But when we look at the number of translations, the number of technical commentaries and discussions, our pride reluctantly disappears. Have we captured this "soul-size" dimension in our writing?

There is a certain *naïveté* in assuming that, given a religious topic and a Christian writer or translator, we automatically produce Christian literature. True Christian literature is imaginative, creative and above all redemptive—it is the expression of the journey of a human soul, not into the lands or life of

bygone societies and their language, but into the frightening, ever changing, valleys and heights of human existence, into the new uncharted areas, led (or pursued) by Him who is the Lord of all life.

Miss K. H. Henrey, in an article on the Christian novel, quotes Canon Roger Lloyd, "... if it is important that theology should be studied by the man and woman in the pew, it is increasingly necessary to woo them and entice their attention . . . Creeds have to be compressed into poems and doctrines into novels before most moderns will read them." If we are to have a reader who is prepared, we must first have a writer that is aware. In this way Christian faith becomes vital and vibrant; its meaning is our meaning, its glory our glory, its vision our vision. To imaginatively express that vision of our souls in literature is the aim of the Christian writer.

Some steps have already been attempted. Many years ago a Fellowship of Christian Writers was formed in the Arabic areas of the Council. Up until the present, most of their publications have dealt with either church history or theology. Recently, however, one of these writers published a volume of reflective essays and poetry privately and unobtrusively—far too unobtrusively for sales and distribution—but nevertheless an indication that soon the dimension of the soul will not be lost in the wilderness of technical title.

In 1960, the Near East Christian Council sponsored a training institute for Christian writers. On that occasion forty-eight writers from twelve different countries met for three weeks to study simple writing, magazine production and religious drama writing. Many of those present were already involved in the business of writing, but it is hoped that soon new writers will be emerging as a fruit of the institute, writers willing to venture new forms, new expressions, new life. For original writing in all forms is urgently needed, and the Council stands behind to encourage all new writers and to give them every opportunity for further development of their talents.

In mentioning forms and expressions, let us remember that Christian literature does not only mean sermons, commentaries, religious talks and discussions. There is a place for the novel, for the short story, as well as for the essay and the poem. And not only in the printed page, or book or pamphlet. The *Voice of the Gospel* is opening before the Near East tremendous possibilities in radio writing. This would include not only short radio drama, but short stories, essays and poetry as well. Incidentally, further information on these new opportunities is available upon request through either the Literature Department of the N.E.C.C., or the *News Bulletin*.

There are some key guideposts to writing that should be remembered.

- (a) Write for those you know best in the language you know best. Don't separate yourself from or lose sight of the person to whom you're writing.
- (b) Believe in what you're writing, and, if you don't, then don't write it!
- (c) Consecrate your imagination, but speak clearly in all truth and honesty.

As you can see, they are not so much literary guideposts as guides to life.

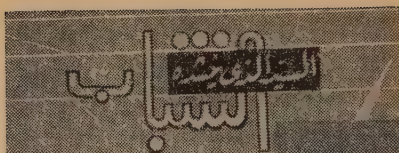
For Christopher Fry's words, "Affairs are now soul size," extend to literature as well as to the whole Church of God. In the midst of all the impersonalities of the world of 1961 they point the way to the Gospel of personal redemptive love and life. Our emphasis on the soul size of literature is also our Lord's emphasis on the soul size of life, and without it, we might just as well forget about publishing and distributing books!

Around the East

The Rev. Samuel Habib was appointed as the delegate to represent the Near East and the Islamic lands at the All-Africa Christian Literature Conference at Kitwe, Northern Rhodesia, held the last two weeks of June.

The Radio Project Committee will meet for its regular quarterly meeting in Jerusalem, August 26th and 27th.

Members of the *I.M.C. Survey Team on the Near East Ministry* are expected to begin the survey in early October, moving from Iran in the east to Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon in the west. The Rev. Douglas Webster, of C.M.S., London, and the Rev. K. L. Nasir of Gujranawala, West Pakistan, have been named to the Team, along with the Rev. Sam Habib and the Rev. Don MacNeill.



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NEAR EAST CHRISTIAN COUNCIL

*Recently...
from the Secretary*

ONLY ONE MAN, present at the founding of the Near East Christian Council at Helwan, Egypt, in 1927, was also present at the Thirteenth Plenary Assembly held in April of this year in Beirut. Dr. William N. Wysham was thirty-four years ago a missionary to Iran; during these last months he has again been in the Near East, surveying the opportunities for literature distribution and making valuable recommendations, under the auspices of the Council.

During these thirty-four years the Council has survived wars and rumours of wars, both on world scale and within the Near East. New national boundaries have been drawn; new nations have come into being. Of the fourteen countries within which the Council operates, seven have taken on a new status of independence. In similar fashion, the younger churches have assumed a new type of independence in relation to one another and to the mission bodies with which most of them are associated. More and more the pattern of integration of the foreign mission body within the national church has become the rule rather than the exception, especially among the Anglican and the Presbyterian churches. In the Council this fact has been marked by the increase of national delegates, and by the tendency to become a council in which the membership of churches is stressed more and more. The words "for Missionary Cooperation" were dropped from the official name of the Council, not to diminish the emphasis on missionary responsibility, but to make it an integral part of the "Christian" life and work of the churches.

At the Triennial Meeting in April we made an attempt to understand afresh our responsibilities in the Near East and to grasp our opportunities. We stand in a different context from the one in which we stood thirty-four years ago, or ten years ago, or last year. The opportunities are different; the responsibilities are different.

Today we stand within a few short months of the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches at New Delhi, and the integration of the International Missionary Council with the World Council. At that time we shall come into a new relation-



ship with those orthodox churches which are members of the World Council but which are not members of the Near East Christian Council. Some of them have appointed delegates and observers to our meetings, and to committees of our major projects, and in these deliberations we have had the benefit of their advice and insights. But it may be that we shall be called to work together in other closer ways.

We stand in a new context too in regard to the great tools for the proclamation of the Gospel, literature and the radio. Literature is the oldest of the great projects of the Council; yet just now we are given a great new means of forward movement through a centralized program of production and distribution. Where this is to lead no one knows. But we do know that it is a significant responsibility to which we must be sensitive.

As literature was the earliest, so radio is the latest reason for cooperation among the churches in the Near East. We can as yet but imagine the vast opportunities opened up by this tool of mass communication. The months and years ahead will be crammed with interest. It is not yet clear whether we shall be fully able to meet the situation in the way that it deserves. Until the churches in all the Near East lay hold of this tool, and do their utmost to contribute to the broadcasts and to make effective their message through follow-up, no one can say how significant the radio station will actually be.

As we look forward to this new triennium, the over-arching question will be: What is the Council's relation to the whole Christian work, and the whole work of evangelism, in the Near East? Are the churches of the Near East responsible for the whole area; and if they are, are they beginning to assume this responsibility? What are the new, emerging relationships between the orthodox churches and "mission" in these countries?

Our sights are being raised. Among those who helped us to raise them at the Triennial Meeting were Dr. Norman Goodall, Dr. H. H. Wolf, and Dr. N. Nissiotis. Dr. Goodall, secretary of the Joint Committee of the I.M.C. and the W.C.C., has been for several years the one most deeply concerned with the preparations for the integration of the two great ecumenical councils. His kindly advice and gracious guidance were of help



Dr. Norman Goodall addressing the Council

many times as we discussed plans for the days to come. Professor Wolf and Dr. Nissiotis, both from the Ecumenical Institute, also helped us as we looked toward integration, and towards the new patterns of inter-church cooperation that lie before us in the Near East in the coming years.

Beirut, May 1961.

Last Page Tottings . .

THE NEW ELECTIONS of the Triennial Meeting of April 1961 had us tearing our hair (what little is left by this time) trying to find room for all the new additions! But there are six new additions for whom we can readily find room, and they are the members of the new Editorial Board of the NEWS BULLETIN. In their hands will be the responsibility for keeping the editor on the "straight and narrow", and avoiding the meanderings of the past! Let us introduce them:

Miss Dorothy Blatter, of Istanbul, Turkey. A literature expert, and master of format and design . . .

The Right Reverend Hassan Dehqani, of Isfahan, Iran. An author, an evangelist and a frequent contributor . . .

The Reverend Farid Mangarious, of Cairo, Egypt. Also an author and former N.E.C.C. Associate Secretary.

Mr. Ibrahim Mattar, of Beirut, Lebanon. Editor of the *Neshera* magazine, and a prolific Arabic writer.

Mr. Habib Said, of Cairo, Egypt. Editor of *Orient and Occident* magazine, and N.E.C.C. Literary Secretary.

The Reverend 'Aql 'Aql, of Amman, Jordan. Writer and theologian.

* * *

The next issue, Advent, will be devoted to a bit of tentative probing into imaginative and creative ministries that are opening up in the Near East. You can probably guess some of them already—radio, literature, industrial zones . . . but then maybe you have some ideas on this new frontier of evangelistic ministry, and we hope you'll write and share them with us. This subject is timed to coincide with the I.M.C. Project on the Ministry in the Near East.

* * *

Blessings upon you all for responding with comments on our new format! They were predominantly in laudatory approval, and we thank you . . . hoping that you will keep writing so that our thinking may be your thinking, and your activities our concern.

Pax and God Guide

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The Near East Christian Council

is an organization composed of regional Christian councils, churches and missionary societies, seeking to make effective cooperation and witness of the churches in an area extending from Morocco and Algeria to Iran and Arabia, from Turkey to the Sudan and Ethiopia.